

purely political motives is to only strengthen Putin's hand. The majority—vast majority—of Democrats and Republicans want to see this legislation done, and get it done we will, as soon as tomorrow.

Off the floor, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will mark up the nomination of Bridget Brink to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. Ms. Brink's nomination is terrific news at a critical moment for Ukraine and the United States. She is deeply experienced. She has already won bipartisan support in this Chamber, and she is very much needed as the United States seeks to strengthen our democratic ties to the war-torn nation. Ms. Brink's nomination will be a top priority to the Senate when she comes before the Chamber.

#### RESTAURANTS

Mr. President, on a different matter—the restaurants bill—tomorrow, the Senate is going to hold a vote on legislation to help our restaurants, gyms, minor league teams, and other small businesses that have been utterly devastated by the COVID pandemic.

This bill, championed by my colleagues Senator CARDIN, a Democrat, and Senator WICKER, a Republican—which I very strongly support—will help restaurants and other small businesses like gyms that were left out in earlier rounds of emergency aid. Every proposal included in this package is bipartisan.

Some have said: Well, COVID is over, and the restaurants are back. I see them sort of full.

That may be true for some restaurants, but for just about every restaurant, there is a shortage of labor, and many are only opening at limited times. Most of the restaurants I speak to are either closed certain days, don't serve lunches, or whatever, because they can't find labor.

Let's not forget that many of the restaurants, particularly the smaller ones, the nonchain ones, had to borrow during COVID, borrow large amounts of money. They need to repay that money, and they can't do it based on their limited incomes that are occurring right now. If they don't get the money to pay it back, the lenders are going to foreclose and close restaurants that are already back on the road to prospering and recovering. That makes no sense.

We must pass this legislation. I hope we will get a good number of our Republican colleagues to join Senator WICKER in supporting this. Two years into this crisis, the idea that restaurant owners have all recovered could not be further from the truth.

Restaurants are part of the fabric of every Main Street and every tight-knit neighborhood. It is where friends run into each other on the weekends, grab a drink after work, have lunch after church. The same can be applied to minor league teams and local gyms and businesses that support theaters. These are places where Americans have always come together.

I was proud to champion the \$28 billion restaurant relief in the American Rescue Plan, but these establishments, as I mentioned, still need our help. Tomorrow, there should be a strong bipartisan show of support to help these businesses.

#### VETERANS

Finally, there is another area that we will be voting on. There is an important announcement this morning for our Nation's veterans. Chairman TESTER and Ranking Member JERRY MORAN of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will announce a bipartisan proposal on comprehensive legislation to help millions of our Nation's veterans who struggle with sickness because of exposure to toxins during their military service, including exposure to toxic burn pits and Agent Orange.

This has for years—for years—been a top priority of mine. I have worked closely with advocates like VSOs and Jon Stewart and John Feal to get this Senate to act on this long-neglected problem. I am happy to see burn pit legislation has taken an important step closer to passage.

I thank Senators TESTER and MORAN for their good work. I strongly support the agreement reached by TESTER and MORAN, and it is my intention to have this on the floor of the Senate the week that we return from the Memorial Day work period.

Our veterans—we will see them on Memorial Day—are very eager for this bill. I hope veterans throughout the country will let their Senators know how important this legislation is. Our veterans need it, they deserve it, and we have a moral obligation to take care of those who have sacrificed so much for us.

#### TRIBUTE TO SUZIE ORLOVE

Finally, Mr. President, today I want to bring special attention and praise to Suzie Orlove, my beloved and talented and deeply dedicated director of constituent service, who is retiring today after 37 amazing years in my office. Imagine that. She has worked in my office—first as a Congressman, then as Senator—for 37 years.

Suzie and I first met in the second grade in P.S. 19, Miss Ruth Moore's second grade class, and we have been friends ever since. Suzie stood out even in second grade for her compassion and her intellect.

Soon after I was elected to the House, Suzie came to work in my office and dedicated herself to making government work for everyday New Yorkers. She became a healthcare policy expert, navigating Medicaid, Medicare, and facing down often intransigent health insurance companies for constituents who often face life-and-death challenges. She became a maven navigating the bureaucracy of Social Security for our seniors and disabled. Year after year, Suzie oversaw the process of interviewing and nominating extraordinary young New Yorkers to our military academies.

The list of people she has helped is practically endless. All across New York, there are so many people who are grateful to Suzie Orlove for helping them in ways when they really needed help. She is amazing, as is the number of staffers she helped train to serve New Yorkers with diligence. She trained my staff—everyone who came in—but she also gave lots of advice to the staff of other of my colleagues, first in Congress and now in the Senate.

She is amazing—amazing.

Suzie Orlove, every day you came into work, you were dedicated to helping people—something that has always been a part of you. You were the strong glue in the office, teaching so many others who came and went how to help people, do casework, and do it with fierce dedication but a friendly smile as well.

All our office staff—past, present, and future—are grateful to Suzie for who she is and what she has done.

Suzie, thank you for your service. To quote the old song, "We're gonna miss you when you're gone."

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the majority leader reminds us of the tragedy that occurred in Buffalo over the weekend and how the shooter was somehow captivated by the notion of replacement theory—a theory which is so insane and so mean-spirited that it ignores what this country is all about.

A few minutes ago, over at what they call the House swamp, we held a press conference. Senator ALEX PADILLA of California, myself, Congresswoman ROSS, and Congressman BERA met with a group of young people. There were about 50 of them. Some were high school age; some were in college. They are the sons and daughters of people who came to the United States on H-1B visas. These are visas where people are allowed to come here for a period of years and work, and the visas can be renewed.

Children and families who accompany them are growing up in America, living in America, while the breadwinner goes off to work each day, but the clock is ticking. When the kids of these visa holders reach the age of 21, they are subject to self-deportation. In other words, they have no legal rights in America to remain.

The reason that they are in suspense for so long is that the green card backlog can be decades while the parents are waiting for permission to become legal in the United States on a permanent basis. So these young people live in uncertainty.

Senator PADILLA's bill is an effort—and I join with him in that bill—an effort to give them the opportunity to earn their way to citizenship, to become legal in America. Why would we give up this talent? These young people have grown up in America. They have

been successful in school. They have participated in community activities. They are ready to be part of America's future, I can tell.

One young woman got up there and told the story of how she came to California with her parents under similar circumstances. She now is completing her Ph.D. in biochemistry at Cornell University. She wants to go into cancer research. Is America better if we force her to leave this country at this point? She doesn't think so. She thinks she can make this a better nation and better world if she can stay in America.

The folks who are so dead set against immigration ought to just pause for a moment and meet the people we are talking about, the people who are coming into this country, taking the jobs which Americans don't want to take, doing things which Americans aspire to but don't achieve, and many other aspects of our life that are really enriched by their presence.

So I would urge my colleagues to support us in this bipartisan effort for this bill. But I would also urge them to step back and make it clear, the "replacement theory" is an insane approach to America. It ignores our history; it ignores our future; and it ignores the reality of our economy today.

#### E-CIGARETTES

Mr. President, my family, like many families in America, has been touched by tobacco-related disease and death. My father died of lung cancer when I was 14 years old—he was 53. Two packs of Camels a day, he got lung cancer and died at that age. I still remember it to this day, even though it happened over 60 years ago. I am not alone in that. There are so many families that can tell that story, sadly.

And because of it, I have really focused on stopping Big Tobacco from addicting more and more Americans and sentencing them to death, in many instances, because of their deadly products.

Over the years, I have had some success. It was over 25 years ago that I banned smoking on airplanes. Senator Frank Lautenberg picked up the bill over here on the Senate side, carried it successfully, and it was signed into law.

It changed—we didn't realize it at the time, it just changed America's attitude toward smoking. It was, indeed, a tipping point. But I have been watching Big Tobacco ever since. Their approach to building their market is very basic. They have to lure children into the addiction. Kids that are not mature enough to say no pick up the addiction of smoking and end up carrying it to their graves, if they are not careful.

And so we have, over the years, put warnings on cigarette packages, raised the price beyond the reach of children, and done everything that we could.

Well, these Big Tobacco interests are not discouraged. They found a new product that is wildly popular among

young people that creates a similar addiction. It's called e-cigarettes or vaping. Ask any of your kids in high school, ask the teachers in the schools and the principals, what is going on with vaping in your schools today? You will find it's wildly popular, and kids are taking it up. And many of them switch from the vaping products to tobacco products and, ultimately, at the expense of their health.

That is what has happened. So we basically said to the Food and Drug Administration: You have a responsibility to regulate this. They can't put their products on the shelves without you taking a look at it.

Well, let me tell you the story of what has happened. These companies have flooded the market with addictive vaping devices, companies like JUUL, which is partially owned by the tobacco companies, and they promoted their products to children.

For years, none of these devices were legally authorized, and, yet, they have poisoned the developing brains and bodies of our kids. Who was supposed to be the cop on the beat? The Food and Drug Administration in Washington, but they were nowhere to be found. After years and years of the FDA failing to regulate e-cigarettes—listen to this—a Federal district court stepped in and mandated that the Food and Drug Administration fulfill its statutory public health duty.

On Friday, the Food and Drug Administration submitted an update on its Agency's long overdue review of e-cigarette applications.

Listen to this. In it, the Food and Drug Administration admitted it will not finish reviewing e-cigarettes until July 2023, nearly two years past the Court's deadline of last September. This is a stunning disclosure.

This means that JUUL and other e-cigarettes that kids get hooked on in the nicotine contained in the product and which have not received an authorization from the FDA may continue to be sold with impunity for more than a year. Imagine the thousands of students who will become addicted to these products while the FDA dawdles.

What is most incredible to me is that this outcome is not inevitable. In fact, if it wanted to, the Food and Drug Administration, before the end of business today, could remove these products by regulation from the shelves of America.

That is right: Addictive e-cigarettes like JUUL are only on store shelves because the FDA has given tobacco companies a free pass to sell their vaping products.

This is just wrong. This is exactly the opposite of the intent of the law. With this decision, the FDA is complicit in endangering the health of America's kids. That is a powerful statement, but I stand by it.

The law is very clear, no tobacco product is supposed to be on store shelves unless its manufacturer proves to the FDA, prior to marketing, that it is appropriate for public health.

How in the world could you prove that a vaping cigarette, e-cigarette, is in some way appropriate for the protection of public health? It is just the opposite, and we all know it.

So today I am beginning by calling on the FDA to immediately halt its enforcement discretion and remove all unauthorized e-cigarettes from the market. Don't allow JUUL and the other tobacco companies one more day of addicting our children. Stop cowering before Big Tobacco's highly paid lawyers.

We have seen too many years of delay by the FDA to the point where the Court had to order them to finally exercise their obligations under the law, and we have seen too many kids hooked on e-cigarettes. If the Food and Drug Administration needs more time to review applications, protect our kids, and clear the market of big tobacco's poison while you are doing it—nothing less than the health and well-being of our children is on the line.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AGRICULTURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, farming and ranching are industries that are particularly subject to the whims of the weather. Just one storm can wipe out an entire herd or crop, sometimes in a matter of minutes.

Last Thursday, several storms struck eastern South Dakota and farmers were hit hard. Fortunately, it was too early in the season to wipe out any crops, but farmers lost essential equipment and resources, feed, grain bins, outbuildings, and more.

My office will be doing everything it can to make sure those affected get the assistance they need to recover, and I know many are already planning to rebuild. Whether it is a natural disaster or an ordinary day, farmers and ranchers are always at the top of my mind here in the Senate. Agriculture is the lifeblood of our South Dakota economy, and I am committed to doing everything I can to ensure that our farmers and ranchers have the resources they need to help feed our country.

I am fortunate enough to be a longtime member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, which gives me an important platform in which to address the needs of South Dakota ag producers. Right now, a big focus of mine is the 2023 farm bill.

I have already held the first of a series of roundtables to hear from South Dakota farmers and ranchers about what they need out of the 2023 farm bill. And I have introduced the first of what will be a number of proposals